

III. Amendments to the Drawings

New Drawings are being submitted herewith.

IV. Remarks

Claims 1-16 were pending in this application and have been rejected. By this amendment, Applicants have amended claims 1, 5, 8, 10, 15, and 16. No new matter has been added by the present amendment. After this amendment, claims 1-16 will be pending.

Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Drawing Objections

A revised set of drawings is provided herewith to address the objections in the Office Action.

Specification Objections

The disclosure was objected to because of the following informalities, which will be discussed in turn.

Drawing references sharing the same name

Page 5, lines 2 and 8 refer to "plug socket" for reference numerals (4) and (9)

The Applicants submit that it is clear from the Figure 1, for example, that reference numerals (4) and (9) refer to the two different ends of the tubular plug-in part. In addition, the Office Action does not state which provision of the MPEP under which this objection is being made. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn.

Page 7, line 13, and page 10, line 16 refer to "snap-action positive fit connection" for reference numerals (26) and (64).

The Applicants submit that it is clear from the Figures 6 and 7, for example, that reference numerals (26) and (64) refer to the two different snap-action positive fit connections in the drawings. In addition, the Office Action does not state which provision of the MPEP under which this objection is being made. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn.

Page 8, line 2 and page 9 line 21, refer to "holding element" for reference numerals (14) and (50).

The Applicants note that reference numeral (14) on page 8, line 2 is referred to as a "holding element 14," whereas reference number (50) on page 9, line 21 is referred to as "tooth-like holding elements 50." (emphasis added). Therefore, reference numerals (14) and (50) do not share the same name. In addition, the Office Action does not state which provision of the MPEP under which this objection is being made. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn.

Page 11 lines 1-2, the recitation "adjoining part 62" was objected to and stated that it should be changed to read --joining part (62)--.

The Applicants have amended the specification to read --joining part (62)--.

Claim Objections

The Office Action stated that claim 10 was objected to because of the following informalities: the recitation "the two groups of in each case comprise" should be changed to read --the two groups, in each case, comprise--.

Claim 10 has been amended as suggested in the Office Action. Applicants respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn.

Rejections of Claims 5 and 8-16 Under 35 U.S.C. § 112 (2nd paragraph)

Claims 5 and 8-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant's regard as the invention.

Claim 5

Claim 5 was rejected as lacking a claim dependency.

Claim 5 has been amended to insert a claim dependency. Applicants respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn.

Claims 10-11

The Office Action rejected claim 10 as the recitation "via a cylindrical fluid-sealing section" allegedly rendered the claim indefinite since it is unclear how the depressions are distributed by means of the fluid sealing section. The Examiner interpreted this to mean that depressions are spaced circumferentially around the fitting. Claim 11 was rejected as being dependent from a rejected claim.

If the Examiner was able to interpret the claim limitation of "via a cylindrical fluid-sealing section" then the claim should not be considered indefinite. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn.

Claim 8-14

The Office Action rejected claim 8 as the recitation of "the plug-in direction" in line 4 allegedly lacked a sufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Claims 9-14 were rejected as being dependent from a rejected claim.

The phrase "as seen in the plug-in direction" has been deleted. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn

Claim 8

Claim 8 was also rejected as the claim was allegedly narrative in form and replete with indefinite and functional or operation language. The Office Action stated that the structure which goes to make up the device must be clearly and positively specified. The Office Action further stated that the structure must be organized and correlated in such a manner as to present a complete operative device and that claim(s) must be in one sentence form only. Claims 9-14 were rejected as being dependent from a rejected claim.

Applicants have amended claim 8. In addition, the Office action has not stated that claim 8 is "insolubly ambiguous." See MPEP § 2173.02 (citing *Metabolite Labs., Inc. v. Lab. Corp. of Am. Holdings*, 370 F.3d 1354, 1366, 71 USPQ2d 1081, 1089 (Fed. Cir. 2004)) ("The requirement to 'distinctly' claim means that the claim must have a meaning discernible to one of ordinary skill in the art when construed according to correct principles. Only when a claim remains insolubly ambiguous without a discernible meaning after all reasonable attempts at construction must a court declare it indefinite.")). Accordingly, Applicants submit that the Office Action has not set forth a prima facie case of indefiniteness.

The Examiner referred the Applicants to the cited patents for claim format. Applicants point out that MPEP § 2173.02 cautions that "some latitude in the manner of expression and the aptness of terms should be permitted even though the claim language is not as precise as the examiner might desire." Accordingly, Applicant respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 15 and 16

The Office Action stated that with regard to claims 15 and 16, the word “means” was preceded by the word(s) “further comprising” and “characterized in that” in an attempt to use a “means” clause to recite a claim element as a means for performing a specified function. The Office Action further alleged that since no function is specified by the word(s) preceding “means,” it was impossible to determine the equivalents of the element, as required by 35 U.S.C. § 112, sixth paragraph. See *Ex parte Klumb*, 159 USPQ 694 (Bd. App. 1967).

Claim 16 has been amended to depend from claims 1 or 2. Claim 15 recites “further comprising means for securing the inserted plug-in part against rotation about a plug axis.” This is acceptable means plus function language as it recites “means for” modified by function language. See MPEP § 2181. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 1-3 and 5-7 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) - Ezura

Claims 1-3 and 5-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0178846 issued to Ezura (“Ezura”).

Applicants submit that claims 1-3 and 5-7 are novel over Ezura. Claims 2-3 and 5-7 depend from claim 1. The claimed plug-in connector comprises, in part, a housing part that consists of two parts, i.e., a base part and an insert part, being connected in a manner such that the insert part can be detached from the base part in an easy way.

In contrast, Ezura discloses a tube joint, two parts (guide member 48 and joint body 12) of which are connected in an undetachable manner, as guide member 48 on its outer circumference has a tooth-like annular projection 50 which bites into the inner wall of the joint body 12, and thus the guide member 48 is prevented from disengagement from the joint body 12 (please refer to page 2, paragraph [0036]). Similarly, Ezura discloses another undetachable connection between the joint body 12 and a connecting member 18 in paragraph [0031]. In addition, both connections allow the parts to be turnable relative to one another. This could lead to serious

disadvantages for plug-in connectors, especially in the case of angle connectors (elbow pieces).

In contrast, the present invention provides means for a rotational securing. This allows for directional adjustability, which is of particular importance for angle connectors (see present specification paragraph [0036]). Therefore Ezura does not anticipate the claims 1-3 and 5-7 because the reference fails to disclose all of the elements of claim 1. Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claim 4 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103 – Ezura and Hosono

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0178846 issued to Ezura ("Ezura") as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,447,019 issued to Hosono et al ("Hosono").

Claim 4 depends from claim 1. Claim 1 recites "means for securing against relative rotation are provided between said receiving part and said joining part." This feature allows for directional adjustability, which is of particular importance for angle connectors (see present specification paragraph [0036]). Ezura fails to disclose or suggest this feature. In addition, Hosono also fails to disclose or suggest this feature. Accordingly, Ezura and Hosono each fail to disclose the all of the limitations of claim 4. In that Ezura fails to disclose a claim limitation that is also absent in Hosono, it must be concluded that the combination of Ezura in view of Hosono cannot render the claim 4 of the present application as obvious. Therefore Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 8-14 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103 – Ezura, in view of Legris and Woodling

Claims 8-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0178846 issued to Ezura ("Ezura") as applied to claim 1 above, in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,431,216 issued to Legris ("Legris") and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 3,649,050 issued to Woodling ("Woodling").

Claims 8-14 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1. Claim 1 recites "means for securing against relative rotation are provided between said receiving part and said joining part." This feature allows for directional adjustability, which is of particular importance for angle connectors (see present specification paragraph [0036]). Ezura, Legris, and Woodling each fail to disclose or suggest this feature. Accordingly, Ezura, Legris, and Woodling, alone or in combination, fail to disclose the all of the limitations of claims 8-14. In that Ezura fails to disclose a claim limitation that is also absent in Legris or Woodling, it must be concluded that the combination of Ezura in view of Legris and Woodling cannot render claims 8-14 of the present application as obvious. Therefore Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103 – Ezura, in view of Woodling

Claims 15 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0178846 issued to Ezura ("Ezura") as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,649,050 issued to Woodling ("Woodling").

Claims 15 and 16 depend from claim 1 and/or claim 2 (which depends from claim 1). Ezura discloses a tube joint, two parts (guide member 48 and joint body 12) of which are connected in an undetachable manner, as guide member 48 on its outer circumference has a tooth-like annular projection 50 which bites into the inner wall of the joint body 12, and thus the guide member 48 is prevented from disengagement from the joint body 12 (please refer to page 2, paragraph [0036]). The Office Action alleges that Woodling discloses a tube fitting connection having a means for securing the inserted plug-in part against rotation about the a plug axis (30) and that the means for the rotational securing of positive fit elements are formed in such a manner that the individual parts can be fitted axially but are secured against rotation relative to one another

However, if Woodling were combined with Ezura, then the resulting plug connector would not have an easily detachable base and insert. Accordingly, the claimed invention is non-obvious in view of Ezura and Woodling. Therefore Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present form of the claims are now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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